

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L GENEVA 2937

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: AORG, APER, UN

SUBJ: UN ADMINISTRATION: GENERAL SERVICE (GS) SALARY NEGOTIATIONS

REF: USUN 1572

SUMMARY: DEMARCHE TO SYG WALDHEIM RECOMMENDED AS RESULT OF UK, FRG, CANADIAN AND US MISSIONS IN NEW YORK AUGUST 14 DIFFERS SUBSTANTIALLY FROM INITIATIVE TAKEN BY MISSIONS IN GENEVA, AND WE RECOMMEND STRONGLY AGAINST IT. IDEA ALONG THESE LINES WAS TESTED BY FRG HERE ON SAME DAY AND REJECTED BY EIGHT OTHER MISSIONS CONSULTED. WE UNDERSTAND DEBATIN HAS PLACED 12 PERCENT OFFER ON TABLE, AND THIS IS NOW THE SUBJECT OF NEGOTIATIONS WHICH ARE CONTINUING INTO APRIL 15. END SUMMARY.

1. MISSION STRONGLY RECOMMENDS THAT ANY DEMARCHE TO SYG WALDHEIM NOT RPT NOT BE ALONG LINES CONSIDERED IN NEW YORK CONSULTATIONS APRIL 14. WE VERY MUCH DOUBT IT WOULD BE POLITIC TO QTE WARN UNQTE SYG ABOUT MATTER HE IS RESPONSIBLE TO ADMINISTER. SYG HAS EMPHASIZED BOTH PRIVATELY AND PUBLICLY THERE IS "INVISIBLE THIRD PARTY" PRESENT IN NEGOTIATIONS AND, GIVEN LIMITED LEVERAGE GOVERNMENTS CAN EXERCISE DIRECTLY UPON SALARY DISPUTE AT THIS LATE STAGE, WE BELIEVE INFLUENCE OF
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THIS INVISIBLE THIRD PARTY ON NEGOTIATIONS IS MAXIMIZED

BY KEEPING GOVERNMENTS "INVISIBLE" SO THAT THEIR WILLINGNESS TO PAY THE BILL REMAINS AN UNCERTAIN FACTOR STRENGTHENING THE HAND OF THE UN NEGOTIATOR.

2. WHOLE PURPOSE OF DEMARCHE AND CONSULTATIONS IN GENEVA HAS BEEN TO LEND CREDIBILITY TO EXISTENCE OF THIRD PARTY WHILE STOPPING VERY DELIBERATELY SHORT OF BECOMING INVOLVED IN THE NEGOTIATIONS THEMSELVES. TO PRESENT SYG WITH ANY ILLUSTRATION OF "MODEST INCREASE SUCH AS FIVE PERCENT" WOULD PLACE GOVERNMENTS SQUARELY IN MIDDLE OF NEGOTIATIONS WITH STAFF, AND YET NOT PROVIDE GOVERNMENTS WITH ANY MECHANISM FOR ENGAGING THEMSELVES EFFECTIVELY.

3. WE WOULD DRAW ATTENTION FURTHER TO CONSIDERATION THAT, GIVEN MUTUALLY AGREED GROUND RULES FOR SALARY REVIEW AND DIRECTION WE UNDERSTAND NEGOTIATIONS HAVE NOW TAKEN, OFFER AT THIS POINT OF FIVE PERCENT ON INTERIM BASIS PROBABLY WOULD BE REGARDED BY STAFF AS CHALLENGE TO BREAK OFF NEGOTIATIONS AND STRIKE. IN OUR ESTIMATE THIS IS COURSE STAFF WOULD TAKE, AND PRECIPITATE.

4. WE MAY BE DISTRESSED WITH EXISTING MECHANISMS FOR ESTABLISHING G-LEVEL SALARIES, AND OUTCOME OF THIS ROUND COULD PROVIDE GOOD OPPORTUNITY FOR OVERHAUL, BUT GIVEN EXISTING MECHANISMS WHICH WE HAVE COUNTENANCED OVER THE YEARS IT SEEMS TO US IT WOULD BE BADLY OUT OF BOUNDS FOR CERTAIN GOVERNMENTS (EVEN THE MAJOR CONTRIBUTORS) TO WEIGH IN AND PRONOUNCE TO SYG IN WHAT MAY BE CLOSING PHRASE OF NEGOTIATIONS THAT ANYTHING HIGHER THAN FIVE PERCENT IS "UNACCEPTABLE." CONTRARY TO IMPRESSION OTHERS IN NEW YORK MAY HAVE (REFTEL PARA ONE) DEMARCHE MADE ALONG THESE LINES WOULD NOT BE SIMILAR TO EFFORTS BEING MADE HERE.

5. OBJECTIVE OF MISSIONS HERE THROUGHOUT HAS BEEN (A) TO STRENGTHEN HAND OF ADMINISTRATIONS WITHOUT BECOMING INVOLVED IN ACTUAL FEATURES OF NEGOTIATIONS, WHICH IS TASK FOR ADMINISTRATIONS, WHILE (B) MAKING POINT THAT SALARY ADJUSTMENT MECHANISMS DEMONSTRABLY CONFIDENTIAL

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NEED TO BE OVERHAULED. DEBATIN WELCOMED THIS APPROACH AND, WE ARE TOLD, HAS USED IT TO THE HILT IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH STAFF BY POINTING OUT IN TURN THAT (A) ANY INCREASES SETTLED UPON WILL HAVE TO BE FUNDED AND (B) GOVERNMENTS HAVE TAKEN SPECIAL CARE TO INDICATE DISCREETLY THE CONSIDERABLE RESERVATION WHICH EXISTS AMONG THEM ON THIS SCORE. WHILE PARALLEL DEMARCHES IN NEW YORK ALONG FOREGOING LINE TAKEN IN GENEVA MIGHT BE USEFUL

REINFORCEMENT, DEMARCHE ALONG LINES SET OUT IN REFTEL WOULD REPRESENT NEW DEPARTURE WHICH IN OUR VIEW WOULD DIMINISH INFLUENCE OF GOVERNMENTS ON COURSE OF NEGOTIATIONS. "THIRD PARTY" TO NEGOTIATIONS HAS BEEN HEARD TO SPEAK WITH ONE VOICE, AND TO RAISE THE LEVEL NOW RISKS SHATTERING THIS IMPORTANT FEATURE.

6. AS TO HEADING OFF ANY MOVE BY SYG TO AGREE TO SUBSTANTIAL SALARY INCREASE (WHICH WE TAKE TO MEAN HIGHER THAN FIVE PERCENT), WE HAVE IT ON GOOD AUTHORITY SYG HAS AUTHORIZED DEBATIN TO NEGOTIATE IN RANGE UP TO 12 PERCENT, BUT HAS DRAWN LINE FIRMLY AT THAT UPWARD LIMIT. WE HAVE EQUALLY RELIABLE INFORMATION THAT OFFER OF 12 PERCENT WAS PRESENTED TO STAFF IN WRITING APRIL 13 AND HAS BEEN THE SUBJECT OF NEGOTIATIONS WHICH HAVE GONE ON SINCE THEN.

7. FRG CONVENED CONSULTATIVE MEETING AT AMBASSADORIAL LEVEL APRIL 14 TO TRY TO WIN SUPPORT FOR IDEA OF DEMARCHE TO SYG IN NEW YORK TO URGE HIM TO BREAK OFF NEGOTIATIONS. TO GREAT DISMAY OF FRG AMBASSADOR IDEA WAS REJECTED BY EIGHT OTHER MISSIONS WHICH PARTICIPATED. IT WAS DECIDED THAT THE OBJECTIVE OF EARLIER CONSULTATIONS AND GROUP DEMARCHE HAD BEEN ACCOMPLISHED, THAT THESE WERE THE PROPER LIMITS, AND THAT FURTHER CONSULTATIONS SHOULD AWAIT FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS IN NEGOTIATIONS OF SALARY DISPUTE.

8. FYI: UK MISSION HAS IMPRESSION, WHICH WE ARE INCLINED TO SHARE, THAT CANADIAN MISOFF WHO REPRESENTED CANADA AT MEETING MAY NOT HAVE RECOGNIZED HOW ROUNDLY FRG IDEA HAD BEEN REJECTED, BECAUSE IT WAS DONE GENTLY, AND MAY HAVE GIVEN CONFUSED ACCOUNT BY TELEPHONE TO CONFIDENTIAL

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CANADIAN MISSION IN NEW YORK ABOUT VIEWS IN GENEVA AND ACTIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN TAKEN (TO WHICH HE PERSONALLY WAS NOT A PARTY). FRG AMBASSADOR, WHILE REITERATING THAT HE HAS BEEN ACTING ON HIS OWN RESPONSIBILITY, HAS BEEN PECULIARLY ACTIVE ON THIS QUESTION FROM THE BEGINNING. WHILE OTHERS HAVE GENERALLY SHARED HIS CONCERNS, THEY HAVE HAD DIFFICULTY FREQUENTLY, AS THEY DID APRIL 14, WITH THE APPROACHES TO THE PROBLEM WHICH HE HAS RECOMMENDED. END FYI.ABRAMS

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